Considering that this Ungrateful Age abounds with so much Infidelity, Impiety and Unbelief, as to make some so obstinate as to affirm that the Spirit of Man vanisheth with his Breath, and that Death is only the end of this Life and not the beginning of another, I thought it highly Necessary, as well as Proper and Convenient, in order to awake the hardned and Drowsie Consciences of such, to give some Lively (though brief) touches upon the Four Last Things, viz. Death *which is most certain*: Judgment, *which is most strict*: Hell, *which is most dismal*: Heaven, *which is most delightful*; *All which I shall particularly and briefly Instance.*

I. Of Death.

Psalm 89. 48. *What Man is he that liveth, and shall not see Death.*

Out of the Dust was Man formed, and unto the Dust shall Man return: It is appointed for all Men once to dye, *Heb* 9. 27. Death to the Wicked, is the End of all Comfort, and the Beginning of all Misery; but Death to the Godly is a happy Discharge, and freedom from Sin and Sorrow, and the only Inlet to Peace and Happiness; the Saints enjoyments shall be incomparable, when the Sinners Torments shall be intollerable: When a Sinner dyes, he carries his bad with him, and leaves his good behind him: But when a Believer dies, he leaves all his bad behind him, and carries his good with him: The Sinner goes from good to evil; the Believer from evil to good. When a Saint leaves the World, his Flesh turns to Dust and his Spirit turns to Rest: When a Sinner leaves the World, his Body goes to Worms to be consumed, and his Soul to Flames to be tormented.

Friendly Reader,

If that theſe weighty Conſiderations ſhould be reckoned not worth laying out *One Penny,* be pleaſed to Read it *Gratis,* keep it clean, and return it again.

Price One Penny.

OF

Four Links.

To draw poor Souls to their desired Habitation:

OR,

The Four LAST THINGS

Briefly Discoursed of,

Viz.
- *DEATH*, which is most Certain.
- *JUDGMENT*, which is most Strict.
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To which is Added

Wholsome Instructions both to Young and Old, in order to Prepare themselves for their Latter End, and Avoid all sinful Allurements, which usually obstructs that great and necessary Work of Salvation.

With some Necessary Directions to Dye well, in order to avoid *Hell*, and obtain *Heaven*.

Recommended as very Proper and Useful to be Read in all Families; By the Reverend and Learned Divine J. Stevens, *D. D.*

Licensed according to Order.

DUBLIN, Printed by and for *Joseph Ray* in *Skinner Row*, over against the *Tholsel*, 1700.

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Heaven

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86

[illegible] World, you do but [illegible]
[illegible] you [illegible] of the World, you do but dye to
[illegible] again. He that lives well, cannot dye ill: he that lives
[illegible]thout Fear, shall certainly dye without Hope. He that
[illegible]th no Grace in his Life, can have no true Peace in his
Death. This King of Terrors, Death, levelleth the
highest Mountains with the lowest Vallies; the Robes of
Princes and the Rags of Beggars are both laid up alike in the
Wardrobe of the Grave, which is a Bed to rest in, but not
a Shop to trade in; therefore go to your Beds as you were
going to your Graves, and so close your Eyes in one World,
as you would open them in another; and remember that
God can as easily turn you into Dust, as he took you thence;
to Day is your living Day, to Morrow may be your dying
one: In short, the Meditation of Death is the only Motive
in order for a preparation thereunto.

Therefore, Christian *Soul*, whosoever thou art, consi-
der the *shortness* of thy Life; and how uncertain Death is
he may come this Hour before the next. Thou art not
sure when thou goest to Bed at Night to take thy Rest
whether thou shalt ever awake again, though never so well
and if so be thou awake in the Morning, whether thou shal
live till Night. For *Death* is the great Messenger of Mor-
tality; and his Coming is certain, but when, is uncer-
tain: There is no resisting of his mighty Power when h
comes. He sweeps all before him, both Rich and Poo
Old and Young, it's all one to him, for when their Gla
is run, they must stay no longer here, but to change th
Life for a better or worse, according as thou hast spe
thy time here, whether in doing Good or doing Ev
Therefore, dear Soul, put not off thy Repentance until ano-
ther Day, for thou art not sure to see an end of this
provide therefore that thy Bed may rather find thee fitt

Soul, in thy Health, that when [illegible] thou have nothing to do but to dye. Let not thy Thought be how thou shalt live here, but how thou shalt live hereafter; mind not the vain Pleasures of this World, which is but momentary: but rather pray to God for his Grace (without which you can do nothing) that you may endure all Hardships and Crosses here with patience and comfort; and that you may do all the Good that in you lies to the Advancement of his Glory, and your Eternal Welfare.

II. Of Judgment.

2dly, MEditate upon Judgment, which is most strict: We must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, they who have been graceless in their days, will be speechless in this Day; They who would not come before his Mercy Seat, shall be forced to come before his Judgment-Seat: Those that would not believe his Promises, shall tremble at his Threatnings; and indeed it must be very Amazing to see the Earth flaming, the Heaven melting, the Stars falling, the Graves opening, the Judgment hastening, the Sun and Moon declining, and Christ and his Angels coming; He that comes to raise the Dead, comes also to judge the Dead. Oh this great Day, to great Sinners, will be a terrible and ghastly Day, when they shall behold Christ coming in the Clouds, having the Person of a Man, but the Power of God, being Crowned with Dignity, and guarded with Angels, and enraged with Anger, and enabled with Power to bring forth both High and Low, Rich and Poor to his Bar, where he will Judge them. not by the Whiteness of

[illegible] and you [illegible] was guarded to the Cross with Bands of Soldiers, yet here he is guarded with a glorious Train of Angels. You that make no account of his Coming, what Account will you make at his Coming. Therefore for the Lord's sake, meditate upon *Judgment*, for it is the only means to make you Judgment-proof.

O Christian, seriously consider this, and repent of your sins before it is too late, and break those Bands asunder that leads to utter destruction, for there's no Repentance after Death, for after Death comes Judgment.

O ye *Drunkards*, *Swearers*, *Lyars*, *Whoremongers*, *Covetous*, and *Oppressors* of the *Poor*, you that do despite to the Spirit of Grace, and will not hearken to the many loving Calls and Invitations of Almighty God by his Spirit and Ministry take notice that this Day of God's Wrath, will be a Day of Terrors to you, which will make your Hearts sink within you, your Countenance to change, your Joints to be loosed, when the Terrors of the Almighty at this time shall seize upon you; therefore saith the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 5. 11. *Knowing the Terrors of the Lord, we perswade Men.* This Day will be a Day of extream Sorrow and Anguish to the Wicked, *Prov.* 1. 27 *When your Fear shall come as desolation and your destruction as a Whirlwind.* Zeph. 1. 5. *That day is the day of Wrath, a day of Trouble and Distress, a day of Wastness and Desolutions.*

Therefore, whoever you are, let your daily Practice be in *Piety*, doing Good to those that stand in need of your help, as far as your Circumstances will let you, being Charitable and Compassionate, ever striving against the temptations of the Devil, slighting the foolish pleasures

thing but vexation of Spirit, but [illegible] meditate [illegible] those that are Eternal; for if you expect to be any of those Souls that dwell in those Mansions of Bliss and Happiness, you must *fear God, and keep his Commandments*, for that is the whole Duty of Man.

III. The Torments of Hell, and dismal State of the Wicked.

THe *Third* thing necessary, is to meditate upon *Hell*, which is most dismal and terrible: Oh dreadful Place, where the *Devil* is the Jaylor, Hell the Prison, Damnation the Punishment, Eternity the Time, Brimstone the Fire, and Men and Infernal Spirits the Fuel; to endure this, will be intollerable; and to avoid it, will be impossible. O Christians, this present Day is the Day of God's Long-sufferings, but that will be Man's eternally. Oh what Hells there is in Hell, the loss of God, the loss of Christ, the loss of Saints, the loss of Angels, the loss of all Good, and the gain of all endless, caseless, and remediless Torments: *The Smoke of their Torments doth ascend for ever*, Rev. 14. 11. and 20. 10. Oh that you would think of this Endless and Bottomless Lake.

Consider, that if thou but once droppest into *Hell*, thou wilt be as far from coming out at the end of a thousand Years, as at thy first entrance: So that if all Men that ever have or shall be created, were *Briarheus*-like, hundred handed, and should at once take Pens in their hundred hands, and do nothing else for ten hundred thousand Millions of Years, but sum up in Figures as many hundred thousand Millions as they could; yet could never they re-

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Now let ſuch as forget God, but ſeriouſly conſider th
t will not be an Impriſonment during the King's pl
ſure, but during the King of Kings pleaſure It is no
Captivity of Seventy Years, like that of the Children
Iſrael in *Babylon*; ſo that had an end; nor like a Capti
ty of Seventy Millions of Generations, for that alſo
time would be expired: but even for ever. The Wic
ed ſhall live as long in Hell, as there ſhall be a Juſt G
in Heaven.

Here we meaſure Time by Days, Months Years, b
for Eternity, there is no Arithmetician can number it,
Geometrician can meaſure it: For ſuppoſe the World we
turned into a Mountain of Sand, and that a Little *Wi*
ſhould come every Thouſand Years, and carry away fro
that heap but one grain of the Sand, what an infinite numb
of Years would be ſpent and expired, before the hole ha
would be fetched away. But admit a Man ſhould ſtay in Tor
ments ſo long, and then have an end of his Wo it wer
ſome comfort to think that an end would come; but alas
when he hath finiſhed this Task a Thouſand times o
yer, he ſhall be as far from an end of his Anguiſh, as eve
he was the firſt hour he entred into it. Now ſuppoſe tho
ſhouldſt lie but one Night grievouſly tormented with a *ragin*
Fit of the Stone, Stranguary, Tooth-ach, Pangs of Travai
or the like; though thou hadſt to help and eaſe thee,
ſoft Bed to lie on, Friends about thee to comfort thee,
Phyſician to cure thee, all Cordial and Comfortable thing
to aſſwage the Pain; yet how tedious and painful woul
that one Night ſeem unto thee? How wouldſt thou to
and tumble, and turn from one ſide to another; countin

th

...ock, esteeming every M... sent Misery unsupportable. What then will it be to ... Flames of Fire? (to which our Fire is but Air in com... rison;) Fire and Brimstone kept in the highest Flame... *the unquenchable Wrath of God World without end*; w... thou shalt have nothing about thee but *darkness* and ... *ror*, *wailing* and *wringing of Hands*, *desperate Yellings* ... *gnashing of Teeth*; thy old Companions in *vanity* and ... to *ban* and *curse* thee, the *Devils insulting over thee* ... *cruelty*; the *never-dying Worm of Conscience* to *feed* ... *thy Soul and Flesh for ever*. O Everlasting Eternity; ... *ever dying* Life, and an *ever-living* Death---- O then ... think thy self of this Word **Eternal** and **Everlasting**, ... ponder upon it, yea, do but believe it, and it will be enou... to breake thine Heart, and make it to relent and repe... and thereby prevent the Wrath to come: It will put th... to demur, What have I done? What am I about? Whith... will this course tend? How will it end? What will becom... of me if I go on in *Chambering* and *Wantonness* *Surfeiti*... and *Drunkenness*, *Strife* and *Envying*, *Swearing*, *Prophan*... *ness*, and the like? O then break off thy Sins without d... lay, and let there be an healing of thine Errors.---- Th... *Schools* affirm, that the best *torture* in *Hell* exceeds th... greatest that can be devised, for should we first burn o... one Hand, then another, after that each Arm, and so ... the parts of the Body, it would be deemed intollerable, an... no man would endure it for all the Profits and Pleasures ... this World, can afford; and yet is nothing to the Burnin... of Body and Soul in *Hell*; should we endure Ten Thousa... Years torments in *Hell*, it were grievous, but nothing ... Eternity: should we suffer one Pain, it were miserable enoug... but if ever we come there, our pains shall be for num... and kinds, infinitely various as our pleasures have bee...

each *power* and *faculty* both of
and *Body* shall have their objects of Wickedness, and
without intermission, or end, or ease, or patience to
dure it, *Luke* 12. 5. and 16. 13, *Mat.* 5. 12. and 5. 22.
22. 23. O that Men would consider they hang by
nder strings (a little Breath that expires every Minute)
er the *bottomless Pit*, and that within a little while, no-
ng will remain of the pleasures of Sin, but the *un-dying-*
orm, and the *ever-living-Flames*.

A Man's Condition in this Life may be Honourable, and
his State, as to another Life, may be Damnable; 'tis
tter to go with poor *Lazarus* to *Heaven*, than to go with
h *Dives* to *Hell*. Therefore let us strive to go to Hea-
n by Contemplation, that we may avoid going to Hell
Condemnation.

Consider further, and add *Extremity* to *Eternity*, and
en think of *Hell*, (as truly it is Hell indeed; For if the
gue of a Year, or the Cholick of a Month, or the Rack
a Day, or the Burning of an Hour, or the Minutes
witch of a Tooth, be so unsufferable here, what is *Mil-*
ions of Thousands of Years, nay, *Eternity of unspeakable*
orments in Hell; and instead of being abated, continually
ggravated by infernal *Fiends*, whose Society alone would
e hideously frightful and amazing. Now what Heart
would not bleed to see Men run headlong into these Tor-
tures that are thus endless & intollerable. Oh that it were al-
owed to the desperate Ruffians of these our Days, that Swear
nd Curse, Drink, Rob, and Kill, and Blaspheme, to have
ut a sight of this *Hell*, how would it Charm their Mouths,
Moderate their Spirits, and Astonish their Hearts; nay, if
hey could have but the least glimps thereof, they would
ather chuse to be pined to Death Ten Thousand times over,
han wilfully commit one Sin that would send them thither.

IV. Of

THE *Fourth* neceſſary thing, is to meditate on *Heav* which is moſt Joyful, *Matth.* 25. 38. *Come ye bleſſ inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.* O who can reveal t Glories of Heaven, or what Tongue, can expreſs t Everlaſting Pleaſures that's there. There's no Care nor So row, nor Toil, nor Labour, no Vexation to diſturb your Quie There's all Peace, never-ceaſing Peace. There's all the D vine Souls, as Angels, Saints, Prophets, Martyrs, Seraphin and Cherubims, and all the Cœleſtial Quier, breath forth their harmonious Voices, Eternal Hallelujahs, and Songs Praiſes to the All-glorious, Almighty, and Everlaſting Go Bleſſed for evermore: there every Righteous Soul that depar hence goe and receives a White Robe and an Everlaſtin Crown of Glory; and dwells in that Land of Peace, an drinks of the Rivers of Pleaſures; and not for Time, bu for Eternity; and Eternity, I ſay, that will never have a end: there they behold the Beauty of the Bleſſed God, ſeat ed upon a Throne of Divine Majeſty, with his Dear-be loved Son, (our Bleſſed Saviour) on his Right-Hand: An admire the Gloriouſneſs thereof, there they themſelves out ſhine the Sun in brightneſs; there they continually hear ing Sounds of harmonious Muſick; poſſeſſing continual Joy and endleſs Comfort; there is *mirth* without *ſadneſs*, *ligh* without *darkneſs* *pleaſure* without *pain*, *life* without *death reſt* without *labour*, *plenty* without *poverty*, and *gain* without *loſs*: Who would not but work for this Glory with the great eſt diligence, and wait for it with the greateſt patience: O what *glories* are there in *glory*, *Crowns of Glory*, *Veſſels of Glo ry* a *Weight of Glory* a *Kingdom of Glory*. Heaven is not only poſſeſſion promiſed, but a poſſeſſion purchaſed: When ou Contemplations are in Heaven, then we enjoy a Heaven upo

Earth

en ſhall we enjoy in the company of *Saints* and *Angels*, in whom there is nothing but Joy, Comfort, and Delight. Do we deſire Riches, Honour, Beauty, Pleaſure, Long-Life, or whatever elſe can be named to be delectable, no place ſo glorious by Creation, nor ſo Beautiful with delectation, ſo rich in poſſeſſion, ſo comfortable for habitation, nor ſo durable for laſting: There are no Eſtates but Inheritances no Inheritances but Kingdoms; no Houſes but Palaces; no Noiſe but Muſick; no Robes but Scepters; no Garments but Robes; no Seats but Thrones; no covering for Heads but Crowns, *Rom.* 8.17. *Tit.* 3.7. *Heb.* 9.15. *Matth.* 25.31,34. In ſhort, our Joy there will be full, and none ſhall be able to take it from us, or leſſen it; *Solomon* in all his Glory and Royalty to this, was but a Spark of Light in a Chimney to the Sun in the Firmament. *Abſalom*'s Beauty to that, is but Deformity. Nay, Paradiſe, or the Garden of *Eden*, was but a Wilderneſs, compared with this. And if the Gates of Heaven be of Pearl, what then are the Preſence-Chamber of the great Monarch? and what ſhall I ſay more, but as the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith, *Glorious things are ſpoken of thee thou City of our God*, Pſal. 85. 3. Rev. 4. 2, 3. and 21. 10. to the end. That which makes Heaven ſo full of Joy is, it is above all Fear, and that which makes Hell ſo full of Horror, is that it is below all hope. The Veſſels of Grace ſhall ſwim in the Ocean of Glory. Here all the Earth is nothing for one Man, but there one *Heaven* is enough for all Men. Therefore Sirs, Live ſo that the Word which hath brought Salvation to your own Souls, may bring your Souls to Salvation. We muſt firſt ſhine in Grace, before we can ſhine in Glory. —— Oh conſider alſo how much of your precious Time is waſted and ſpent, and yet how little of your great Work is done; hath not your Reſt

ſtolen

Your Work is great, and your Time is ſhort; you have a God to Honour, a *Chriſt* to Believe in, a Soul to ſave, a Race to run, a Crown to win, a *Hell* to eſcape, and *Heaven* to make ſure of; you have many Temptations to withſtand, and many afflictions to bear, many Mercies to improve, and many Duties to perform, therefore, O Chriſtian, Redeem the Time, becauſe the Days are Evil. *Ephes.* 5. 15. O that every ſtep your Souls take, might be towards Heaven, and that you would make ſure of God to Day, becauſe to Morrow you are not ſure of your Selves: Therefore for the Lords ſake Improve your Time, and for your Souls ſake redeem your time. The Lawyer will not loſe his Term, the Waterman will not loſe his Tide, the Tradeſman will not loſe his Exchange-time, the Husbandman will not loſe his Seaſon, and will you loſe your Seaſon? if you loſe your Seaſon, you loſe your precious Soul. There is but one *Heaven*, and if you miſs of that, you will certainly take up your Lodging in *Hell*.

I muſt ſum up all with theſe Exhortations, let me beſeech you who are *Young Men* and *Young Women*, to remember your Creator in the Days of your Youth, that is to ſerve God; to love God, to Honour God, and to obey God in your Youthful Days; for the Flower of Life is of Chriſt's ſetting, therefore let it not be of the Devils plucking. Oh, Young People, if you be now ſick of the *will not*, in Old Age you will dye (perhaps) of the *cannot*; If God's to Day will be too ſoon for thy Repentance, thy to Morrow will be too late for his Acceptance: Let nothing be done in this World which cannot be anſwered in another, nor nothing undone which may be neceſſary in another. He that departs this World in *Faith* ſhall be ſaved, but he that departs from the *Faith* ſhall be Damn'd: Therefore I ſay to you all both Old and Young

wit

ays abounding in the Works of the Lord, for as much
ou know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Some Holy Directions to Dye well.

MY Brethren, *what doth the Lord require of you but t*
do Justice, to love Mercy, and walk humbly wit
God, and to break off with your Sins, and to take no pleasur
r delight in, but hate and abhor them for the future, and ut
erly cast them behind your Backs, and to press forwards to th
Mark of the Prize of the high Calling in Christ Jesus ou
Lord: for time is hastening and coming on, wherein it sha
e said, He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he tha
s filthy let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous le
im be righteous still, *&c. The infinite holy and heart-search*
ing God watcheth, seeth, and takes a strict Account of all you
ctions, and they will find you out, and if not truly Repente
f and Pardoned, they will lye down with you in the Grave
nd follow you into another World, and meet you at God
readful Bar and be open to the view of the whole World.
Therefore whatsoever it is now your Duty to do, both to Go
and Man, now set about and do it with all your Might. Ec
clesiasticus 9. 10. Now before the Decree comes forth,
and the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you.

1. *Be very careful and diligent in those Means that ar*
appointed for your Salvation, 2 Pet. 1. 19. Make you
Calling and Election sure, *&c. It is our present Work an*
Business to make sure of Eternal Happiness and Blessedness;
for there is no Landing at the shore of Felicity, without sailing
in the Bark of Fidelity, till you are sure of Salvation, yo
will never be free from Temptations. Strive to enter in a
the streight Gate, *Luke* 13. 24.

2. Therefore pray without ceasing, 2 *Thes.* 4. 14. Pra
continually, though you be not always at Prayer: our dail
want

ers to the most High God, Maker of Heaven and Earth: let be your first Work and your last Work: You that would be Christians indeed, and not in outward Shew and Profession only, lock up your Hearts with Prayer, and give God the Key and he will preserve you, and then you may Sleep without any fear or danger. O! you will never want a Praying time, if you do not want a Praying frame. O the strength and vertue of Divine Prayer, it will fetch Fire from Heaven, yea an Angel from Heaven to fetch a Peter *out of Prison: They that Pray heartily and in Faith, may fully be assured they shall speed happily.*

3dly, *Take all Opportunities, and embrace them, for the hearing of the good Word of God, for* Faith comes by hearing of the Word Preached.

4thly. *Live in Love and Charity towards all Men, your greatest Enemies as well as your best Friends,* 1 John 3. 18. My Children let us not love in Word, neither in Tongue, but in Love and Truth: *Let your Love be real and true, and not selfish.* Gal. 5. 1. 4. Love thy Neighbour as thy self. *And he that is wanting in this Work, doth not rightly and truly love himself, this Love is called an* Old Commandment *and a* New Commandment *it is as old as the Law of* Moses, *and as new as the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The* Natural *and* Moral Man *may love his Friend but the true Christian indeed loves his Enemies. A Christian should wish the best to them that wish the worst to him.*

5thly, *Be ye humble Christians,* Matth. 11. 29. *A Believer is like a Vessel at Sea, the more it fills the more it sinks, none so humble on Earth, as those that live highest in Heaven. Where Humility is the Corner Stone, there Piety is the Top-Stone, the Cloth of Humanity should always be worn upon the Back of Christianity. If you were to go to the*

Grave

[illegible] shattered [illegible] their Eyes wasted, their Flesh c[illegible] their Mouths corrupted, that it is like were lofty One[illegible] [illegible] be now their ruddy Lips, their lovely Cheeks, their fl[illegible] [illegible] Tongues, their sparkling Eyes? Are they not all gone an[illegible] [illegible] to nothing, and so will you be e're long: Therefore wh[illegible] [illegible] have we to be proud of those things.

6thly If we have got into God's favour, let us be sure t[illegible] [illegible] to keep in his favour whilst we live, and then certainl[illegible] [illegible] shall die in his favour.

Oh! whoever you be that happen to read these few Lines, [illegible] me beg of you to make Religion your main business; Hear[illegible] [illegible] Reading, Praying, and Believing. Do nothing in this World, [illegible] what can we answer in another; For we shall all ap[illegible] [illegible] before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, &c. 2 Cor. 5. 10. T[illegible] [illegible] well is a long Art, which thou hast but a short time to learn; [illegible] that have long furnished themselves with all Spiritual [illegible] Means, find work enough to vanquish and overcome all their [illegible] Enemies; how then shall thou careless Soul, if thou [illegible] not take hold of this Opportunity, be in hopes to effect it, [illegible] the onset of the Enemy shall be most strong and prevalent, [illegible] thou through Pains in the Body and Perplexities and Di[illegible] [illegible] of the Mind very weak, and no ways able to resist; [illegible] Impediments shall be multiplied, and Helps diminished, [illegible] Distraction great, thy Inclination little, and Leisure none; [illegible] at the Hour of Death, there are so many and great thing[illegible] [illegible] will cause thee to Die, that thou shalt have neither [illegible] nor Time, nor Strength to die well.

Therefore as thou desirest the Everlasting Welfare of thy [illegible] and immortal Soul, let what has been desired of [illegible] in this small Piece, be strictly observed and done without [illegible] that so you may be everlastingly happy with God and his [illegible] Angels in the highest Heavens.

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